TO YOUNG POLITICAL WORKERS

BHAGAT SINGH

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The following document was written by Shahid (martyr) Bhagat Singh on February 2, 1931, while he was incarcerated and awaiting his execution. He was executed on March 23, 1931 at the age of 23. In his letter, Singh analyzes India's freedom movement through dialectical/historical materialism and class struggle. He tackles the questions of compromise and violence in the national liberation struggle, critiques and warns us of the national bourgeoise, and discusses nationalist and socialist bases of revolution. He calls on the youth to adopt Marxism as their guiding ideology, to engage directly with the masses, and to organize workers and peasants into a political force—the Communist Party. He reminds us that true revolution is about the complete overthrow of the existing, oppressive order and the gradual and painstaking construction of a new democratic and socialist order. Notably, the first published version of this text was censored—all mentions of Marx, Lenin, the Soviet Union, and the Communist Party, were removed. The uncensored text surfaced in a secret report published by the Government of India in 1936.

As South Asians in the diaspora, we stand in unequivocal solidarity with our sisters and brothers resisting the rising authoritarianism and brutal repression of Left groups by the Hindutva fascist Modi-Shah regime and their comprador allies. South Asia is at a decisive moment of upheaval—one that is unmasking imperialist forces and corrupt neoliberal policies. Over the past two years, similar waves of protest have been erupting from Kenya, to Bangladesh, to Nepal, to the Philippines, and more. **To Young Political Workers** ***is a grounding and essential text for all of us. We are in a moment ripe with victory, and we must drive forward and continue its momentum.***

LAL SALAM! JAI BHIM! INQUILAB ZINDABAD!

For more information on the 2026 youth protests, we encourage you to start here: https://www.indialaboursolidarity.org/statement-on-student-protests
https://peoplesstruggle.org/en/long-live-the-struggle-of-indian-youth-against-neoliberal-education-and-the-us-backed-modi-shah-regime/

Action–Survey of the locality

(The Government maps are to be spotted showing routes, canals possible shelters for members.) The model is indicated below from "Field notes, Afghanistan, 1914.")

1. Physical Features, General Boundary, Rivers, Flood seasons, Bridges, Forts and Ferries, Navigability, Waistes.
2. Populations, Religion; Language, Tribes, Castes, Distinctive dress and character.
3. Supply – Fodder, firewood, grain transport, Ponies, Mules, Bullocks, Donkeys, Horses, Camels, Motors and Buses.
4. Forces – Police, Military Police – Military their strength, their activities if tempered, Outpost stations , cantonments . Distribution of Police, of the military police , of the infantry , cavalry or artillery – of arms and magazines , guns, pistols , rifles , small arms and big arms . Possible fighting men from the locality – hostile and friendly –

Roads: Description and a chart as follows

1. Form ……to …… ….Miles
2. Stages: ……..stop ……Miles
3. Nature: Metalled – Motorable - Kutcha , etc
4. Obstacles; Difficult in rains, etc
5. Water supply, fuel, fodder connection, with remarks.

Training In volunteer corps – University corps, etc. Thorough study of the "Field Service Regulation " Vol. I And Vol. II is bound to be profitable. This knowledge is essential. Study of more military Literature and acquaintance with wherever possible, Soldiers in barracks and cantons to be encouraged.

<u>Duty of the Seniors (ii)</u>

Action of Finance

To be undertaken at the request of the Finance Committee and the General Committee with their sanction. To be limited to public money and Foreign capitalistic gains, for the present, the effect on popularity and unpopularity, should be final test for such action.

Sabotage

On behalf of the Unions at the direction of the General Committee

Collection of Arms

See foregoing.

Actions for Terrorizing

Against individual only in very extreme cases when his offence is against the public, not against mere groups or individual. Generally to be discouraged unless forged circumstances.

Insurrection

When the Supreme Council directs. Group rising essential. Raids for arms.

APPENDIX A.

Duties of the General Committee

Recruiting groups

A country-wide youth league chain which is almost complete. It has be linked together and most closely co-operate with the other Schools, Colleges, Gymnasiums, Clubs, Libraries, Study circles, Welfare association and even Ashrams. Every inch of it are to be nabbed by the Youth Movement.

Propaganda

The Press is the best medium, but in rural areas the platform is to be utilized. Nothing is so helpful for workers and the masses as cheap, plainly written periodicals, books or leaflets. A warning is to be given against the present supply —the stuff we consume. It is not an easy art to say what one has to say and make others hear him. Special duty of seducing the military should be assigned to tried workers, e.g., 27 percent of the army of the Punjabi Musalman are to be tampered by their Punjabi kinsmen. The Gurkhas are a problem, the Sikhs, Marhattas and Rajputs are not so.

General policy

Substitution of the bureaucratic authority by that of the masses. The Union of labourers, ryots, artisans, in their aggressive struggle to enforce their own right must be trained for the revolutionary offensive for capture of the political power.

Co-ordination

Calling for reps. of the local unions to form the local General Committees, calling for reps. to form the Central Committee of the party, and for delegates from time to time to meet in conferences for deciding on policy or programme.

Organization

Besides the forgoing, the selection of personal and members of other committees.

APPENDIX B.

Duties of the Committee of Action.

Composition: Its membership is bound to be not large but efficient. It should insist on a rigorous discipline. It will supply the leaders for the Revolutionary "Red'' Army, hence, extreme care and caution should be taken in its composition, and its existence and activities are to be kept secret from the ordinary members of the party.

Duty of the Junior & Women.

Espionage and intelligence supply

Collection of Arms

To the present method should be added the method of direct acquisition through international sources. Members should be a sent to Western Countries for the purpose and the for learning the use of arms, e.g., Lewis and Vickers guns, preparation of hand-grenades, etc;

To Young Political Workers

Dear Comrades,

Our movement is passing through a very important phase at present. After a year's fierce struggle some definite proposals regarding the constitutional reforms have been formulated by the Round Table Conference and the Congress leaders have been invited to give this * (help if they) think it desirable in the present circumstances to call off their movement. Whether they decide in favour or against is a matter of little importance to us. The present movement is bound to end in some sort of compromise. The compromise may be effected sooner or later. And compromise is not such ignoble and deplorable a thing as we generally think. It is rather an indispensable factor in the political strategy. Any nation that rises against the oppressors is bound to fail in the beginning, and to gain partial reforms during the medieval period of its struggle through compromises. And it is only at the last stage—having fully organized all the forces and resources of the nation—that it can possibly strike the final blow in which it might succeed to shatter the ruler's government. But even then it might fail, which makes some sort of compromise inevitable. This can be best illustrated by the Russian example.

In 1905, a revolutionary movement broke out in Russia. All the leaders were very hopeful. Lenin had returned from the foreign countries where he had taken refuge. He was conducting the struggle. People came to tell him that a dozen landlords were killed and a score of their mansions were burnt. Lenin responded by telling them to return and to kill twelve hundred landlords and burn as many of their palaces. In his opinion that would have meant something if revolution failed. Duma was introduced. The same Lenin advocated the view of participating in the Duma. This is what happened in 1907. In 1906, he was opposed to the participation in this first Duma which had granted more scope of work than this second one whose rights had been curtailed. This was due to the changed circumstances. Reaction was gaining the upper hand and Lenin wanted to use the floor of he Duma as a platform to discuss socialist ideas.

Again after the 1917 revolution, when the Bolsheviks were forced to sign the Brest Litovsk Treaty, everyone except Lenin was opposed to it. But Lenin said: "Peace." "Peace and again, Peace: peace at any cost-even at the cost of many of the Russian provinces to be yielded to German War Lord." When some anti-Bolshevik people condemned Lenin for this treaty, he declared frankly that the Bolsheviks were not in a position to face the German onslaught and they preferred the treaty to the complete annihilation of the Bolshevik Government.

The thing that I wanted to point out was that compromise is an essential weapon which has to be wielded every now and then as the struggle develops. But the thing that we must keep always before us is the ideal of the movement. We must always maintain a clear notion as to the aim for the achievement of which we are fighting. That helps us to verify the success and failures of our movements and we can easily formulate the future programme. Tilak's policy, quite apart from the ideal i.e. his strategy, was the best. You are fighting to get sixteen annas from your enemy, you get only one anna. Pocket it and fight for the rest. What we note in the moderates is of their ideal. They start to achieve one anna and they can't get it. The revolutionaries must always keep in mind that they are striving for a complete revolution. Complete mastery of power in their hands. Compromises are dreaded because the conservatives try to disband the revolutionary forces after the compromise. But able and bold revolutionary leaders can save the movement from such pitfalls. We must be very careful at such junctures to avoid any sort of confusion of the real issues especially the goal. The British Labour leaders betrayed their real struggle and have been reduced to mere hypocrite imperialists. In my opinion, the diehard conservatives are better to us than these polished imperialist Labour leaders. About the tactics and strategy one should study life-work of Lenin. His definite views on the subject of compromise will be found in "Left-Wing Communism." I have said that the present movement, i.e. the present struggle, is bound to end in some sort of compromise or complete failure. I said that, because in my opinion, this time the real revolutionary forces have not been invited into the arena.

The local Revolutionary Party in each area should have:
(a) General Committee: Recruitment, propaganda amongs military, general policy, organization. Co-ordination of the popular Unions (See App. A)
(b) Committee of Finance: This Committee may be composed with a majority of Women members. On it rests the most difficult of all takes and hence it should have ungrudging help from the others. The source of Finance are: Voluntary contribution, forced contribution (Govt. money), foreign capitalist and banking houses, native one in order of precedence, outrages on private personal wealth (however repugnant to our policy reacts against the party and should not be encouraged), contraband sources (embezzlement).
(c) Committee of Action: Its composition: A secret body for sabotage, collection of arms, training for insurrection. Groups (a) Younger: Espionage, local military survey (b) Experts: collection of arms, military training etc.
(d) Committee of Women: Through no artificial barrier is recognized between men and women, yet for the sake of convenience and safety of the party there should be for the time being such a body entirely responsible for its own members. They may be put in entire charge of the Finance Committee and of the considerable activities of the General Committee. Their scope on the Action Committee is very limited. Their primary duties will be to revolutionise the women folk and select from them active members for direct service.

It might be concluded from the programme outlined that there is no shortcut to Revolution or freedom. It cannot “dawn on us one fine morning.” That would, were it possible, be a sad day. Without the base work, without the militant masses and the party ready in every way, it would be a failure. So we have to stir ourselves. And we have to remember all the time that the capitalistic order is drifting ahead for a disaster—the catastrophe will spark off perhaps, in course of two or three years. And if we still dissipate our energies or do not mobilze the revolutionary forces, the crisis will come and find us wanting. Let us be warned and accept two and three years plan of Revolution.

It will be mainly a body of revolutionary-intellectuals, men and women, and on them will devolve the duty of planning and executing, publicity and propaganda, initiating and organizing, or coordinating the activities and linking up the different unions into an offensive, of seducing the army and the police and forming the army of revolution with themselves and these forces, of offering combined and organised armed resistance in the shape of raids and risings, of mobilising forces for mass insurrection and fearlessly guiding them when that hour comes. In fact, they are the brains of the movement. Hence what they will require is character, i.e., capacity for initiative and revolutionary leadership and above all it should be disciplined and strengthened by an intensive study of politics, economic problems, of history and social tendencies, and current diplomatic relations, of the progressive sciences and the science and art of modern warfare. Revolution is the creation of hard thinkers and hard workers. Unfortunately, the intellectual equipment of the Indian Revolutionaries is often neglected, but this has made them lose sight of the essential of revolution as well as the proper bearing of their actions. So a revolutionary must make of his studies a holy duty.

The party, it is clear, can in certain matters, act openly and publicly. It should not be secret insofar as it can help it. This will disarm suspicion and will bestow on it prestige and power. The Party will have to shoulder high responsibilities, so it will be convenient to divide it into certain committees for every area with special tasks allocated to each of them. The division should be flexible, and according to the needs of the hour, or on the study of the possibilities of a member, he should be assigned duties under any such local committee. The local committees are subordinate to the Provincial Boards, and they in their turn to the Supreme Council. The work of liaison “linking“ within the province should be the concern of the P.B. and inter-provincial liaison is to be maintained by the Supreme Council. All sporadic actions or disintegrating Factors are to be checked but over-centralisation is not feasible, and hence better not be attempted yet. All the local committees should work in close cooperation having on each one representative of other committee. The Committee should be small, composite, efficient, never allowed to degenerate into discussion clubs.

This is a struggle dependent upon the middle class shopkeepers and a few capitalists. Both these, and particularly the latter, can never dare to risk its property or possessions in any struggle. The real revolutionary armies are in the villages and in factories, the peasantry and the labourers. But our bourgeois leaders do not and cannot dare to tackle them. The sleeping lion once awakened from its slumber shall become irresistible even after the achievement of what our leaders aim at. After his first experience with the Ahmedabad labourers in 1920 Mahatma Gandhi declared: "We must not tamper with the labourers. It is dangerous to make political use of the factory proletariat" (The Times, May 1921). Since then, they never dared to approach them. There remains the peasantry. The Bardoli resolution of 1922 clearly defines the horror the leaders felt when they saw the gigantic peasant class rising to shake off not only the domination of an alien nation but also the yoke of the landlords.

It is there that our leaders prefer a surrender to the British than to the peasantry. Let alone Pandit Jawahar Lal, can you point out any effort to organize the peasants or the labourers? No, they will not run the risk. There they lack. That is why I say they never meant a complete revolution. Through economic and administrative pressure they hoped to get a few more reforms, a few more concessions for the Indian capitalists. That is why I say that this movement is doomed to die, maybe after some sort of compromise or even without. They young workers who in all sincerity raise the cry "Long Live Revolution," are not well organized and strong enough to carry the movement themselves. As a matter of fact, even our great leaders, with the exception of perhaps Pandit Motilal Nehru, do not dare to take any responsibility on their shoulders, that is why every now and then they surrender unconditionally before Gandhi. In spite of their differences, they never oppose him seriously and the resolutions have to be carried for the Mahatma.

In these circumstances, let me warn the sincere young workers who seriously mean a revolution, that harder times are coming. Let them beware, lest they should get confused or disheartened. After the experience made through two struggles of the Great Gandhi, we are in a better position to form a clear idea of our present position and the future programme.

Now allow me to state the case in the simplest manner. You cry "Long Live Revolution." Let me assume that you really mean it. According to our definition of the term, as stated in our statement in the Assembly Bomb Case, revolution means the complete overthrow of the existing social order and its replacement with the socialist order. For that purpose our immediate aim is the achievement of power. As a matter of fact, the state, the government machinery is just a weapon in the hands of the ruling class to further and safeguard its interest. We want to snatch and handle it to utilise it for the consummation of our ideal, i.e., social reconstruction on new, i.e., Marxist, basis. For this purpose we are fighting to handle the government machinery. All along we have to educate the masses and to create a favourable atmosphere for our social programme. In the struggles, we can best train and educate them.

With these things clear before us, i.e., our immediate and ultimate object having been clearly put, we can now proceed with the examination of the present situation. We must always be very candid and quite business-like while analysing any situation.

We know that since a hue and cry was raised about the Indians' participation in and share in the responsibility of the Indian government, the Minto-Morley Reforms were introduced, which formed the Viceroy's council with consultation rights only. During the Great War, when the Indian help was needed the most, promises about self-government were made and the existing reforms were introduced. Limited legislative powers have been entrusted to the Assembly but subject to the goodwill of the Viceroy. Now is the third stage.

The masses are bound to respond to such a programme—we only have to reach them. It is the supreme task. Enforced ignorance on their part, and apathy of the intelligent classes on the other, have created an artificial barrier between the educated revolutionary and his less fortunate comrade of the sickle and the hammer. That must be demolished by the revolutionary. For that purpose:

1. The Congress platform is to be availed of.
2. The Trade Union are to be captured and new Unions and bodies shaped and modelled on aggressive lines.
3. Ryat Union are to be formed to organize them on the issues indicated.
4. Every social and philanthropic organization (even the cooperative societies) that offers an opportunity to approach the masses should be secretly entered into and its activities controlled so as to further the real objective.
5. The Unions are Committees of artisans workers as well as intellectual workers and are to be set up everywhere

These are the lines of approach for the educated and trained revolutionary to reach the masses. And once they are reached, they can be moved easily by a training, at first in aggressive assertion, of their rights, and later on, by militant offensives like strikes combined with sabotage.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

It is on the active group of Revolutionary that the main task of reaching the masses as well as preparing them for the action rests. They are the mobile, determined mind which will energise the nation into a militant life. As circumstances arise they come and will also come for some time longer from the ranks of the revolutionary intelligentsia, who have broken away from their bourgeois or petty bourgeois traditions. The revolutionary party will be composed of these souls and they will gather around them the more and more active recruits from the labour, peasant or small artisan classes.

THE PROGRAMME

The need of hour is for a clear, honest programme for the revolution, and determined action for realization of the programme. In 1917 before the October Revolution had come off, Lenin, still in hiding in Moscow, wrote that for a successful revolution 3 conditions are essential:

1. A political-economic situation
2. A rebellious mass mind, and
3. A party of revolutionaries, trained and determined to lead the masses when the hour of trial arrives

The first condition has been more than fulfilled in India; the second and third yet await finally and completeness. To mobilise them is the work before all workers of freedom and the programme should be farmed with that end in view. We propose to discuss its outline in the following and our suggestion on each section are to be detailed out in the Appendix A and Appendix B .

(1) The base work

The foremost duty before workers is to mobiles the masses for militant mass action. We need not his play on his blind prejudices, sentiment, piety or passive idealism. Our promises to him are not mere sops or half a loaf. They are complete and concrete, and we can be with him sincere and plain, and should never create in his mind any miasma of prejudices. The revolution is for him, for to name only the prominent heads:

1. Abolition of Landlordism.
2. Liquidation of the peasants' indebtedness.
3. Nationalization of land by the Revolutionary State with a view finally to lead to improved and collective farming.
4. Guarantee of security as to housing
5. Abolition of all charges on the peasantry except a minimum of unitary land tax.
6. Nationalization of the Industries and industrialization of the country.
7. Universal education.
8. Reduction of the hours of work to the minimum necessary.

Now reforms are being discussed and are to be introduced in the near future. How can our young men judge them? This is a question; I do not know by what standard are the Congress leaders going to judge them. But for us, the revolutionaries, we can have the following criteria:

- Extent of responsibility transferred to the shoulders of the Indians.
- Form of the Government institutions that are going to be introduced and the extent of the right of participation given to the masses.
- Future prospects and the safeguards.

These might require a little further elucidation. In the first place, we can easily judge the extent of responsibility given to our people by the control our representatives will have on the executive. Up till now, the executive was never made responsible to the Legislative Assembly and the Viceroy had the veto power, which rendered all the efforts of the elected members futile. Thanks to the efforts of the Swaraj Party, the Viceroy was forced every now and then to use these extraordinary powers to shamelessly trample the solemn decisions of the national representatives under foot. It is already too well known to need further discussion.

Now in the first place we must see the method of the executive formation: Whether the executive is to be elected by the members of a popular assembly or is to be imposed from above as before, and further, whether it shall be responsible to the house or shall absolutely affront it as in the past?

As regards the second item, we can judge it through the scope of franchise. The property qualifications making a man eligible to vote should be altogether abolished and universal suffrage be introduced instead. Every adult, both male and female, should have the right to vote. At present we can simply see how far the franchise has been extended.

I may here make a mention about provincial autonomy. But from whatever I have heard, I can only say that the Governor imposed from above, equipped with extraordinary powers, higher and above the legislative, shall prove to be no less than a despot. Let us better call it the "provincial tyranny" instead of "autonomy." This is a strange type of democratisation of the state institutions.

The third item is quite clear. During the last two years, the British politicians have been trying to undo Montague's promise for another dole of reforms to be bestowed every ten years till the British Treasury exhausts.

We can see what they have decided about the future.
Let me make it clear that we do not analyse these things to rejoice over the achievement, but to form a clear idea about our situation, so that we may enlighten the masses and prepare them for further struggle. For us, compromise never means surrender, but a step forward and some rest. That is all and nothing else.

Having discussed the present situation, let us proceed to discuss the future programme and the line of action we ought to adopt. As I have already stated, for any revolutionary party a definite programme is very essential. For you must know that revolution means action. It means a change brought about deliberately by an organized and systematic work, as opposed to sudden and unorganised, or spontaneous change or breakdown. And for the formulation of a programme, one must necessarily study:

- The goal.
- The premises from where we are to start, i.e., the existing conditions.
- The course of action, i.e., Means and Methods.

Unless one has a clear notion about these three factors, one cannot discuss anything about programme.

REVOLUTION

What we mean by Revolution is quite simple. In this century it can mean only one thing—the capture of the political power by the masses, for the masses. It is in fact The Revolution. Other risings attempt a mere change of your lordships, trying to perpetuate the rotting capitalistic order, of which No amount of profession of sympathy for the people and the popular cause can ultimately hoodwink the masses about the true nature and portent of such superficial replacement. In India too, we want nothing less then the regime of the Indian proletariat in the place of the Indian Imperialists and their native allies who are barricaded behind the same eronomic system of exploration. We can suffer no black evil to replace the white evil. The evils have a community of interest to do any such thing.

The proletariat revolution is the only weapon of India to dislodge the Imperialist. Nothing else can attain this object. Nationalists of all shades are agreed on the objective—Independence of the Imperialists. They must realise rebelliousness of the masses is the motive force behind their agitation and militant mass action alone can push it to success. Having no recourse to it easily, they always delude themselves with the vision of the what they consider a temporary remedy but quick and effective remedy, viz overthrowing the foreign rule by an armed opposition of a few hundreds of determined idealist nationalists and then reconstructing the State on Socialistic lines. They should see into reality of the situation, arms are not plenty, and in the modern world the insurrection of an untrained body isolated from the militant masses stands no chance of success. The nationalists to be effective must harness the nation into action, into revolt. The nation is not the loudspeakers of the Congress, it is the peasants and the labourers who form more than 95 percent of India. The nation will stir itself to action only on assurance of nationalization. i.e.. freedom from slavery of Imperialist-capitalists.

What we need to keep in mind is that no revolution can succeed or is to be desired, but the proletariat revolution.

Topography favoured such a warfare, and Ireland after all had to be satisfied with an unaccomplished movement. It has lessened the bonds but not released the Irish proletariat from the shackles of the Capitalist, native and foreign. Ireland is a lesson to India and a warning: warning us how nationalistic idealism devoid of Revolutionary social basis, although with all other circumstances in its favor, may still lose itself in the shoals of a compromise with Imperialism. In a sense Gandhism with its counter-revolutionary creed of quietism makes a nearer approach to the revolutionary ideas. For it counts on mass action, though not for the masses alone. They have paved the way for the proletariat revolution by trying to harness them, however crudely and selfishly to its political programme. The Revolutionary must give to the angle of nonviolence his due. The devil of terrorism needs, however, no compliments. The terrorist has done much, taught us much and has his use still, provided we do not make a confusion of our aims and means. At desperate moments we can make terrorist outrages our best publicity works but it is nonetheless, fireworks should be reserved for a chosen few. Let not the revolutionary be lashed round and round the vicious circle of aimless outrages and individual self-immolation. The inspiring ideal for all and sundry workers should not be that of dying for the cause but of living for the cause, and living usefully and worthily. Needless to point out, that we do not repudiate terrorist activities altogether. We want to asses its proper value from the standpoint of proletariat Revolution. The youth, who is found not to fit in with the cold and silent organization work, has another role to play—he is to be released from the dry work and allowed to fulfill his destiny. But the controlling body should always forsee the possible reaction of the deed on the party, the masses and on the enemy. It may divert the attention of the first two from militant mass action to the stirring sensational action and it may supply to last with clues for striking at the root of the whole party In either case it does not advance the cause. Secret military organization is, however, not an anathema. Indeed it is the front line, “the firing line’’ of the Revolutionary party; it must be linked with the “base” formed by a mobile and militant mass party. Collections of arms and finances for organization are therefore to be under taken without any scruple.

We have discussed the present situation to some extent. The goal also has been slightly touched. We want a socialist revolution, the indispensable preliminary to which is the political revolution. That is what we want. The political revolution does not mean the transfer of state (or more crudely, the power) from the hands of the British to the Indian, but to those Indians who are at one with us as to the final goal, or to be more precise, the power to be transferred to the revolutionary party through popular support. After that, to proceed in right earnest is to organize the reconstruction of the whole society on the socialist basis. If you do not mean this revolution, then please have mercy. Stop shouting "Long Live Revolution." The term revolution is too sacred, at least to us, to be so lightly used or misused. But if you say you are for the national revolution and the aims of your struggle is an Indian republic of the type of the United State of America, then I ask you to please let me know on what forces you rely that will help you bring about that revolution. The only forces on which you can rely to bring about that revolution whether national or the socialist, are the peasantry and the labour. Congress leaders do not dare to organize those forces. You have seen it in this movement. They know it better than anybody else that without these forces they are absolutely helpless. When they passed the resolution of complete independence—that really meant a revolution—they did not mean it. They had to do it under pressure of the younger element, and then they wanted to use it as a threat to achieve their hearts' desire—Dominion Status. You can easily judge it by studying the resolutions of the last three sessions of the Congress. I mean Madras, Calcutta and Lahore. At Calcutta, they passed a resolution asking for Dominion Status within twelve months, otherwise they would be forced to adopt complete independence as their object, and in all solemnity waited for some such gift till midnight after the 31st December, 1929. Then they found themselves "honour bound" to adopt the Independence resolution, otherwise they did not mean it. But even then Mahatma Ji made no secret of the fact that the door (for compromise) was open. That was the real spirit. At the very outset they knew that their movement could not but end in some compromise. It is this half-heartedness that we hate, not the compromise at a particular stage in the struggle.

Anyway, we were discussing the forces on which you can depend for a revolution. But if you say that you will approach the peasants and labourers to enlist their active support, let me tell you that they are not going to be fooled by any sentimental talk. They ask you quite candidly: what are they going to gain by your revolution for which you demand their sacrifices, what difference does it make to them whether Lord Reading is the head of the Indian government or Sir Purshotamdas Thakordas? What difference for a peasant if Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru replaces Lord Irwin! It is useless to appeal to his national sentiment. You can't "use" him for your purpose; you shall have to mean seriously and to make him understand that the revolution is going to be his and for his good. The Revolution of the proletariat and for the proletariat. When you have formulated this clear-cut idea about your goals you can proceed in right earnest to organize your forces for such an action. Now there are two different phases through which you shall have to pass. First, the Preparation; second, the Action.

After the present movement ends, you will find disgust and some disappointment amongst the sincere revolutionary workers. But you need not worry. Leave sentimentalism aside. Be prepared to face the facts. Revolution is a very difficult task. It is beyond the power of any man to make a revolution. Neither can it be brought about on any appointed date. It is brought can it be brought about on an appointed date. It is brought about by special environments, social and economic. The function of an organized party is to utilise any such opportunity offered by these circumstances. And to prepare the masses and organise the forces for the revolution is a very difficult task. And that requires a very great sacrifice on the part of the revolutionary workers. Let me make it clear that if you are a businessman or an established worldy or family man, please don't play with fire. As a leader you are of no use to the party. We have already very many such leaders who spare some evening hours for delivering speeches. They are useless. We require—to use the term so dear to Lenin—the "professional revolutionaries." The whole-time workers who have no other ambitions or life-work except the revolution.

It has fulfilled and is fulfilling the role of an intermediate party of Liberal-Radical combination fighting shy of the reality of the situation and controlled mostly by men with stakes in the country, who prize their stakes with bourgeoise tenacity, and it is bound to stagnate unless rescued from its own fate by an infusion of Revolutionary blood. It must be saved from its friends.

TERRORISM

Let us be clear on this thorny question of terrorism. The cult of the bomb is old as 1905 and it is a sad comment on Revolutionary India that they have not yet realized its use and misuse. Terrorism is a confession that the Revolutionary mentality has not penetrated down into the masses. It is thus a confession of our failure. In the initial stages it had its use; it shook the torpor out of body politic, enkindled the imagination of young intelligentsia, fired their spirit of self-sacrifice and demonstrated before the world and before our enemies the truth and the strength of the movement. But by itself it is not enough. Its history is a history of failure in every land—France, in Russia, in Balkan countries, in Germany, in Spain, everywhere. It bears the germ of defeat within itself. The Imperialist knows that to rule 300 millions he must sacrifice 30 of his men annually. The pleasure of ruling may be bombed out or pistolled down, but the practical gain from exploitation will make him stick to his post. Even though arms were as readily available as we hope for, and were it pushed with a thoroughness unknown anywhere else, terrorism can, at most, force the Imperialist power to come to terms with the party. Such terms, a little more or less, must fall short of our objective—complete independence. Terrorism thus hopes to wring out what Gandhism bids fair to attain—a compromise and an installment of reforms—a replacement of a white rule at Delhi by a brown rule. It is aloof from the life of the masses and once installed on the throne runs the risk of being petrified into a tyranny. The Irish parallel, I have to warn, does not apply in our case. In Ireland it was not sporadic terroristic activities she witnessed; it was a nation wide rising, the rank and file were bound by an intimate knowledge and sympathy with the gunmen. Arms they could have very easily, and the American-Irish poured out their money.

The following is an extension of the previous document, providing further analysis of Party-building and the Party Programme, written by Bhagat Singh in February 1931. These notes are not commonly included with his letter, despite being written together. For this reason, we find it important to preserve, challenge, investigate, and study from these texts as a pair.

OUR OPPORTUNITY

Indian freedom is not perhaps any longer a far distant dream; events are moving apa.ce and it may become a reality sooner than we expect. British Imperialism is admittedly in a tight corner. Germany is about to topple down, France is tottering, even the United States shaky. And their difficulty is our opportunity. Everything points to that long prophesised eventuality—the ultimate and inevitable breakdown of the Capitalistic order of Society. Diplomats may agree to save themselves and Capitalistic conspiracy may yet keep the wolf of Revolution away from their doors. The British budget may be balanced, the moribund mark granted some hours of respite and King Dollar may retain his crown; but the trade depression, if continued, and continued it must be, we know the members of unemployed being multiplied daily as a result of the Capitalistic race in production and competition is bound to throw the Capitalistic system out of gear in the months to come. The Revolution is, therefore, no longer a prophecy and prospect—but "practical politics," for thoughtful planning and remorseless execution. Let there be no confusion of thought as to its aspect or as to its immediacy, its methods and its objective.

GANDHISM

We should not have any illusion about the possibilities, failures and achievements of the Congress movement, which should be, as it is today, be better stamped Gandhism. It does not stand for freedom avowedly; it is in favour of "Parternership," a strange interpretation of what "complete independence" signifies. It's method is novel, but for the helplessness of the people. Gandhism would gain no adherent for the Saint of Sabarmati.

The greater the number of such workers organised into a party, the greater the chances of your success. To proceed systematically, what you need the most is a party with workers of the type discussed above with clear-cut ideas and keen perception and ability of initiative and quick decisions. The party shall have iron discipline and it need not necessarily be an underground party, rather the contrary. Though the policy of voluntarily going to jail should altogether be abandoned. That will create a number of workers who shall be forced to lead an underground life. They should carry on the work with the same zeal. And it is this group of workers that shall produce worthy leaders for the real opportunity.

The party requires workers which can be recruited only through the Youth movement. Hence we find the Youth movement as the starting point of our programme. The youth movement should organize study circles, class lectures and publication of leaflets, pamphlets, books and periodicals. This is the best recruiting and training ground for political workers. Those young men who may have matured their ideas and may find themselves ready to devote their life to the cause, may be transferred to the party. The party workers shall always guide and control the work of the Youth movement as well. The party should start with the work of mass propaganda. It is very essential. One of the fundamental causes of the failure of the efforts of the Ghadar Party (1914-15) was the ignorance, apathy and sometimes active opposition of the masses. And apart from that, it is essential for gaining the active sympathy of and organising the peasants and workers. The name of party or rather, a communist party. This party of political workers, bound by strict discipline, should handle all other movements. It shall have to organize the peasants' and workers' parties, labour unions, and may even venture to capture the Congress and kindred political bodies. And in order to create political consciousness, not only of national politics but class politics as well as the party should organize a big publishing campaign. Subjects on all proletens (problems) enlightening the masses of the socialist theory shall be within easy reach and distributed widely. The writings should be simple and clear.

There are certain people in the labour movement who enlist some absurd ideas about the economic liberty of the peasants and workers without political freedom. They are demagogues or muddle-headed people. Such ideas are unimaginable and preposterous. We mean the economic liberty of the masses, and for that very purpose we are striving to win political power. No doubt in the beginning, we shall have to fight for little economic demands and privileges of these classes. But these struggles are the best means for educating them for a final struggle to conquer political power.

Apart from these, there shall necessarily be organized a military department. This is very important. At times its need is felt very badly. But at that time you cannot start and formulate such a group with substantial means to act effectively. Perhaps this is the topic that needs a careful explanation. There is very great probability of my being misunderstood on this subject. Apparently I have acted like a terrorist. But I am not a terrorist. I am a revolutionary who has got such definite ideas of a lengthy programme as is being discussed here. My "comrades in arms" might accuse me, like Ram Prasad Bismil, for having been subjected to certain sort of reaction in the condemned cell, which is not true. I have got the same ideas, same convictions, same zeal and same spirit as I used to have outside, perhaps—nay, decidedly—better. Hence I warn my readers to be careful while reading my words. They should not try to read anything between the lines. Let me announce with all the strength at my command, that I am not a terrorist and I never was, expect perhaps in the beginning of my revolutionary career. And I am convinced that we cannot gain anything through those methods. One can easily judge it from the history of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. All our activities were directed towards an aim, i.e., identifying ourselves with the great movement as its military wing. If anybody has misunderstood me, let him amend his ideas. I do not mean that bombs and pistols are useless, rather the contrary. But I mean to say that mere bomb-throwing is not only useless but sometimes harmful.

The military department of the party should always keep ready all the war-material it can command for any emergency. It should back the political work of the party. It cannot and should not work independently.

On these lines indicated above, the party should proceed with its work. Through periodical meetings and conferences they should go on educating and enlightening their workers on all topics.

If you start the work on these lines, you shall have to be very sober. The programme requires at least twenty years for its fulfillment. Cast aside the youthful dreams of a revolution within ten years of Gandhi's utopian promises of Swaraj in One Year. It requires neither the emotion nor the death, but the life of constant struggle, suffering and sacrifice. Crush your individuality first. Shake off the dreams of personal comfort. Then start to work. Inch by inch you shall have to proceed. It needs courage, perseverance and very strong determination. No difficulties and no hardships shall discourage you. No failure and betrayals shall dishearten you. No travails (!) imposed upon you shall snuff out the revolutionary zeal in you. Through the ordeal of sufferings and sacrifice you shall come out victorious. And these individual victories shall be the valuable assets of the revolution.

LONG LIVE REVOLUTION